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ABSTRACT

A study used structuration theory to examine the climate of a school prior to a teachers' strike and explored the theory's value and explanatory power. The school is an older, established elementary school in a small town which borders on a major metropolitan area in the midwest. Data (collected over several weeks during school district negotiations with teachers) included formal interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of written materials. In total, 39 individuals were interviewed. Results indicated a concept pool composed of several unitary terms--education, caring, committed--and several binary oppositions--professional/union, dedicated/won't be abused. The concepts were then translated into a kernel climate with an inversion at the collective belief level. In this particular situation, the model kernel climate was stronger than the inversion, but continued coopting by the district of climate apparatuses which support the inversion climate could lead to the inversion becoming a model kernel climate. (A figure listing elements of the concept pool, the model kernel climate and inversion climate, and affective reactions is included. (Contains 15 references.) (RS)

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Striking is Hard to Do:

The Structuration of School Climate

During Teacher Contract Negotiations

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Abstract

Research on the emergence and change in organizational climate has been plagued with conflicting research results and controversy. While some researchers have argued that climate is an organization-level construct, others have argued that it is an individual-level construct. Conflicting research results have further added to the controversy. However, applying structuration theory (Giddens, 1979) to climate emergence and change, Poole and McPhee (1983) argue that climate is an intersubjective construct.

This paper reports on an application of structuration theory to the climate of an elementary school in the weeks preceding a teacher strike. The research findings suggest interesting implications for the negotiation process with groups of workers who are at once "professional" and "union". Structuration theory proved to be a sound explanatory model for climate emergence and change in this elementary school.

"The hard thing about this strike is that it
just isn't a teacher 'thing' to do."

First grade teacher --
one day before teacher strike

One of the most interesting aspects of the teaching profession is the contradiction between the teacher as a professional and the teacher as a union member. While most teachers consider themselves "professionals" and strive toward a professional style of interaction with students, parents and colleagues, they are also union members who are bound to structures associated with negotiations, rules, and agreements with the school district's officials. While the teacher quoted above believes that striking is not a "teacher thing to do", teacher strikes are relatively common place.

The study reported in this paper examined the climate of a school prior to a teachers' strike. It seemed likely that the climate of the school would be one organizational property which would be most effected by the negotiation process and the impending strike. There were both pragmatic and theoretical questions asked in this research. Pragmatically, it was important to determine the climate of the school. What was it like? How did it feel? What were the implications of the school's climate for the children? The second type of question was theoretical. Do current theories of climate emergence and change explain what was happening at this school?

One problem in studying climate lies in finding an adequate explanatory theory. Several theories on how climates emerge have been posited by researchers (Goodell, 1992). However, researchers have yet to agree on a theory which accurately explains the phenomenon of climate emergence and change (Poole and McPhee, 1983). In fact, the fundamental assumptions underlying climate as a construct are in dispute between researchers. The primary dispute has centered around the definition of climate as a individual property or an organizational property. In other words, while some researchers argue that climate occurs at the individual level construct, others have argued that climate is an organization-level phenomenon. It is this dispute and

conflicting research results which stimulated Poole and McPhee (1983) to argue that climate is an intersubjective phenomenon - at once an individual and organizational phenomenon. Accordingly, they argue for a structurational view of climate emergence. This research drew on the structuration framework (Poole, 1987) to explain climate. Its effectiveness as an explanatory model was also explored. This study applies the theory of structuration to a particular case and explores the theory's value and explanatory power.

Climate

Definition

Organizational climate typically refers to the experienced environment of an organization. The phrases "the tension was so thick you could cut it," and "it was a really relaxed atmosphere" typify the way people describe organizational climates. While these phrases describe climate in an informal fashion, there are several formal definitions of climate. The most comprehensive definition of climate is offered by Poole (1987) who incorporates into his definition elements of climate definitions offered by Taguiri (1968) and Schneider (1975):

> "a relatively enduring quality of the environment which is experienced and perceived by individuals; influences individual interpretations and actions; and can be described in terms of a particular set of characteristics which describe system practices, procedures, and tendencies." (p. 2)

Poole (1985) highlights several important assumptions about climate. First, climate is a molar construct. By assuming that climate is a molar construct, researchers recognize that it characterizes the atmosphere of an entire organization or an entire subunit of an organization. Second, climate is a descriptive element of organizations. As a descriptive aspect of organizational life, it is distinct from satisfaction or morale. Third, climate arises from and is sustained by practices. These practices, or "systematized and customary activities deemed important by the organization or its members" (Poole, 1985, p. 82), serve the function of reinforcing and creating climate over time.

Climate Emergence and Change

As was previously mentioned, there are several theories on how climate emerges. Four will be discussed here. They include structural theory,

interaction theory, selection-attraction-attrition theory, and structuration theory.

Structuralist Theory

The structuralist view argues that climates emerge from and change as a result of organizational structures (Payne and Pugh, 1976). This view argues that as organzational members respond to and interpret organizational structures, climates emerge. There are two important assumptions of this theory. The first is that since organizational structures are shared be all organizational members, climate will be a pervasive feature of an organization. In other words, an organization will have a climate which is commonly shared by all organizational members. The second assumption is that there is then some correlation between an organization's structures and its climate. In other words, organizational leaders may be able to create climates as a results of the structures that enact in their organizations.

Schneider and Reichers (1983) cite two criticisms of the structuralist view of climate emergence. First, this view fails to account for the occurrences of subclimates in organizations. Johnston (1976), for instance, found the occurrence of subclimates in the organization he studied. The second criticism of structuralist theory is that it has not received empirical validation. There is, simply put, little research which supports the theory's explanation of climate emergence. This does not mean necessarily that it is an incorrect explanation for climate emergence. It does suggest that it is an incomplete explanation, however.

Interactionist Theory

A second theory of climate emergence is interactionist theory. The basic premise of interactionist theory is that climates are created and sustained as organizational members communicate about the organization and its features. Interactionist theory assumes that organizational climates occur as individuals attempt to understand and interpret their environments (Schneider and Reichers, 1983; Ashforth, 1985). It is through communication and interaction that climates occur. The assumption inherent in this theory is that the sharing of meanings creates and changes climates.

A second assumption of interactionist theory is that organizational structures have little influence over the emergence and modification of climate. While climate emerges as organizational members interact about structures, the

structures themselves have little influence over climates. It is with this second assumption that criticism of interactionist theory occurs.

Poole (1985) argues that interactionist theory falls short as an explanation of climate emergence because it fails to take into account organizational features. In a study on the perception of climate as a function of network participation, Goodell, Brown, and Poole (1990) found that network participation (an organizational structure) influenced perceptions of climate. Consequently, a theory which fails to account for the influence of structures on climate offers limited explanatory power.

Selection, Attraction and Attrition Theory

According to selection-attraction-attrition theory, climates emerge as a result of organizational membership (Schneider and Reichers, 1983). Climates are determined by selection (who is chosen to be a member of the organization), attraction (who chooses to be a member of the organization, and attrition (who remains in the organization). Accordingly, a climate exists in the organization, aside from membership. Individuals who like working in the climate are selected into it, select it, and remain in it. Climate is maintained and sustained because only individuals who fit the climate are allowed in and remain in the organization.

A key assumption of SAA view of organizational climate is that climate is something which organizational members are aware of and can identify. If they were not aware of it, they could not select into or out of the organization effectively. Anecdotal evidence indicates that this assumption may in fact be true. Nearly everyone knows someone who has decided not to take a job because the place "didn't feel right."

A second assumption of SAA view is that a common climate exists in organizations. Accordingly all organizational members will be able to perceive and agree upon the organizational climate. Key here is the notion that climate is an entity in and of itself outside of and independent of organizational members actions or behaviors.

Structuration Theory

A more complex theory of climate emergence is structuration theory. Advancing the work of Giddens (1979) on the theory of structuration, Poole (1985) defines structuration as the "production and reproduction of social systems via actors' application of generative rules and resources" (p. 18) .

Structuration theory takes a view of climate emergence as an interactive process -- one wherein climate is produced and reproduced within an organizational system. Key to the definition of climate emergence within structuration theory is the definition of systems and structures. Systems are "regularized relations of interdependence between individuals and groups" (Giddens, 1979, p. 66). Organizations and families are examples of systems. Structures are "rules and resources used in the production and reproduction of systems" (Poole, 1985, p. 19). Climate, according to structuration theory, "includes the *mode* of production and reproduction of generalized expectations and beliefs." (Poole & McPhee, 1983, p. 212).

Assumptions

A description of the basic premises of structuration theory, as applied to climate, will assist in its understanding. First, structuration theory assumes that climates are in a continuous state of production and reproduction in organizations. So while climate influences organizational activity, it is also an outcome of organizational activity.

A second premise of structuration theory is that climate is neither an objective nor subjective element of organizations. It is an intersubjective element. While some theorists argue that climate is a subjective element of organizational life (existent only through the eyes of organizational members), others have argued for climate as an objective element of organizations (existent aside from organizational members' interpretations). Structuration theory, as applied to climate, would argue that climates emerge as a product of interactions between people.

A third assumption of structuration theory is that climates are not isolated to one level of organizational life. Previous theories identify climate as an organization-level construct (Glick, 1985) or as a individual psychological construct (James and Jones, 1974). Structuration theory assumes it is an occurrence at different levels of the organization.

How Structuration Occurs

Structuration connects organizational member action and the institution. The process of structuration occurs when organizational members appropriate organizational structures and use them to achieve desired goals. In other words, organizational members use organizational features to achieve desired outcomes. Modalities of structuration are used in the appropriation process. Three types of

modalities are defined: interpretive schemes (which support communication), norms (which provide a moral order for interaction), and facilities (which ground power moves) (Giddens, 1979). Giddens also identifies three general types of structures that are used in modalities: signification (language, symbols), legitimation (religion, rules, ethics, laws), and domination (privileges, resource allocation). According to Poole (1987), **climates can become organizational structures, if they are appropriated by organizational members. Climates can also set the tone for the appropriation of other structures.** So climate is a resource of the organization used in the process of creating regularized relations of interdependence between people. As Poole states: "climate is a structure underlying observable organizational systems." (1987, p. 20).

Poole (1987) identifies at least three factors which influence the appropriation of structures. First is the nature of the interaction system. The network of the organization can influence how organizational members appropriate structures. Individuals in positions of power tend to exert more influence over the structuring process than members with lower power. Additionally, Poole points out that the nature of the interaction influences how the degree of influence a person has over the structuring process. We might expect, for instance, that in an organization of high tension, the individual who functions as a tension reliever may have a good deal of influence over the structuring process.

The second factor which influences the appropriation of structures is individual traits. Intelligence, skills, experience, and the degree of knowledge which the individual possesses about the structure will influence an individual's ability at appropriating structures. If, for instance, an individual is a good communicator, we might expect to see that person as highly skilled at the appropriation of structures.

A third factor which influences the appropriation of structures is historical precedent. Previous occurrences, people and events all influence the current climate of an organization. Because organizational members draw on past actions and experiences to interpret current events, they tend to reproduce historical trends.

The Elements of Climate

There are three layers of climate which can be identified in structuration theory. The first layer which is the "deepest" layer, are the basal constructs of the organization. Basal constructs include "the key terms, distinctions, and structuring principles of the organization." (Poole, 1987, p. 28). This layer includes the basic concepts and ideas which can be used to define the organization. The terms might include things like "commitment" , "non-profit", "professional", "union". These terms can be unitary to the extent that they simply define their organization and its work (i.e. non-profit), or binary in that they may include oppositional terms which are related to the way that individuals define themselves in relationship to others in the organization (professional, union). These terms are the basic building blocks of understanding.

Collective beliefs form the middle layer of the hierarchy. Collective beliefs include the attitudes and values of organizational members about the organization. It includes kernel climates which are the identifiable structures at this layer. A kernel climate is "the basic structure of beliefs, values, and expectations held by most or all members of an organization or unit." (Poole, 1987, p. 20). Kernel climates lend distinction to organizations in that they identify the character of the organization. Kernel climates emerge from basal constructs and assist organizational members in understanding "how we do things around here." There are some variations in kernel climates (Poole, 1987). Particularized climates occur when the kernel climate is altered, elaborated on, or varied. While Poole does not make this argument, it seems logical that particularized climates may be a result of binary oppositions at the basal construct level. Poole does argue that particularized climates emerge as a result of ambiguity in the system which allows for subgroups of employees to interpret climates in a manner consistent with their own experiences.

Poole (1987) identifies several permutations of kernel and particular climates. The first permutation occurs when an organization adopts a single kernel climate with no particular climates. A second variation is the case when one kernel occurs with a particularized climate. Poole points out that this particular climate may be an inversion climate or one contradictory to the kernel. In the third case, several kernels, each potentially having several particularized climates, exist.

The third layer of the hierarchy includes practical structures. Practical structures "directly relate to the conduct of organizational practices such as communication and performance appraisals" (Poole, 1987, p. 31). A common and easily observable practical structure is communication in the form of affect displays.

The Structuration Process

The elements of climate were described in the last section. But the process of structuration still needs to be explained. As was previously mentioned, there are three modalities of structuration. They include interpretive schemes, norms, and power resources. Climate is a part of and interacts with these three modalities. Climate and interpretive schemes interact as the basal constructs, collective beliefs and practical structures are influenced by the interpretive schemes. However, interpretive schemes are also influenced by the aspects of climate. This is the feature of structuration which makes it unique as an explanatory model -- its inclusion of the dynamic of mutual influence between climate and organizational features. Climate and norms and climate and power structures also exist in a mutual-influence relationship. This mutual influence leads to the reproduction of organizational features and climate.

But how does this mutual influence occur? The structuration process is shaped by forces which influence action and by the structural features of organizations. These forces and features are appropriated by organizational members so that members can meet their own goals. It is through this appropriation process that structuration occurs.

The purpose of this study was to examine climate emergence as a structurational process. The specific research question was: **Is structuration an effective and useful model tool for the examination of organizational climate emergence?** The case study approach was used for this research primarily because of the depth of analysis available in case study research. Structurational analysis requires the researcher to explore an organizational system with much depth. While there are drawbacks to the case study approach, it seemed appropriate here.

CASE STUDY

Description of Organization

The school which was the subject of this climate analysis was an older, established elementary school in small town which borders on a major

metropolitan area in the midwest. The school has a staff of approximately 60 full and part-time employees. There is a total of 26 classroom teachers and additional staff which included special teachers, support staff, and the principal. Most of the teaching staff has been at the school many years and the school had no turnover in teaching staff last year. The principal was in her fifth year at the school at the time of this research. One other interesting feature to note about this school is that it celebrated its 120th birthday in 1991. A huge celebration was held and the event served to cement relations between teachers, parents and the community as a whole.

Method of Analysis

The gathering of data for this study took place over several weeks during school district negotiations with the teachers in the district of which this school was a part. Formal interviews were conducted the day prior to a tentative strike by the teachers, but much data was accumulated prior to this day. Interviews, participant observer method, and content analysis of written materials about the strike were all analyzed.

Interviews

Individual unstructured interviews were conducted with ten teachers on the day prior to the strike. The researcher asked general questions related to the strike, such as, how the subject felt about the strike and the general climate of the school. In addition to the individual interviews, four group interviews were also conducted. In total, 39 individuals were interviewed. Interviews were content analyzed to determine key climate themes.

Participant Observation

Participant observation proved to be an very effective way to gain data for this study. It is important to note that the reason that so much data was accumulated through participant observation was because the researcher had had an on-going relationship with this school. The researcher was both a parent and the president of the parent-teacher group and had done previous research in the school. This on-going relationship was in its seventh year.

The researcher was able to observe climate directly over the many weeks preceding the strike. Some of the observations took place during meetings, some during interaction with teachers, but much of it took place as the researcher casually walked the halls of the school. As a frequent visitor to the school, and someone who had done other research at this school, the researcher's presents

was relatively unnoticed. One indication of this was the fact that the teachers were completely comfortable talking about students in the researcher's presence.

Review of Written Materials

One additional data gathering device was the review of written materials. Several letters were sent to parents in the district advising them of the negotiation progress and the potential for strike. Several notices and letters were also sent to the teachers by the union informing them of negotiations and the strike. These written materials were content analyzed also for key themes.

Results

In order to determine how structuration occurred in the creation of and sustaining of the climate in this elementary school, it is first necessary to identify the aspects of the climate. The next part of this paper will describe the climate of the elementary school. After the climate has been described, the structuration of the climate will be discussed.

Climate

As was previously mentioned, the climate of this organization was determined by data collection from interviews, participant observation and an analysis of key written materials. Data analysis included the isolation of themes. In any case, at theme was significant if it was mentioned by more than one interviewee, however, it is important to note that all of the themes were mentioned by at least four respondents. Analysis of the data indicates a hierarchy of climate illustrated in Figure 1.

As the figure indicates, the concept pool is composed of several unitary terms -- education, caring, committed, hard-working, family oriented, and also several binary oppositions -- professional / union, dedicated / won't be abused, humanistic / realistic, proud to be a teacher / embarrassed to be a teacher.

These concepts were then translated into a kernel climate with an inversion at the collective belief level. Phrases such as "Teachers are professionals", "Teaching is a proud profession", and "We work with the district administration and our principal as a team" were all themes which emerged from the concept pool to create a model kernel climate. However, an inversion climate was also apparent in this particular organization. Phrases such as "Teachers are union members", "Teachers must fight to get anything in this district", "I am embarrassed to be a teacher", and "We [teachers] work against the district" were themes which contributed to the inversion particular climate.

At this point, it might be worthwhile to discuss some of the events and comments which lead to these conclusions regarding the kernel climate and the inversion climate. The theme of "teachers as professionals" was apparent in many comments as well as some organizational actions. Several teachers commented in interviews that striking was not a professional thing to do. Many of them talked about physical symptoms - such as loss of sleep, crying, headaches, etc., associated with their wishes not to strike. Interestingly enough, their fears had more to do with how the strike would be interpreted by others than to do with their own finances, etc. For example, one teacher commented that she was quite concerned about what parents would think. She commented that since she lived in her school's neighborhood, some of her parents are also her neighbors.

The teachers reinforced their professionalism in actions too. The para-professional staff in the school was required to work three days into the strike. Since the paras work very closely with the teachers, crossing the picket line could have been a very "sticky" issue. However, the teachers voluntarily told the paras that crossing the picket line was fine and that the teachers would not think less of them for doing it. This scenario is not one which would be likely if the strike were associated with the AFL-CIO or the UAW. By initiating this attitude toward the para-professional staff, the teachers reinforced their own professionalism. It is interesting to note here that the actions taken to promote teacher professionalism came from the teachers themselves, not the district. In fact, the district contributed most to the union theme associated with the climate.

As figure1 displays, unionism became a key characteristic of the inversion climate. An event which promoted the union concept in the climate came from a letter sent home to the parents. The letter explained the negotiation situation and discussed procedures in the event of a strike. It also gave a table on the comparisons between the teachers' demands and the district's offer. The table was filled with asterisks which indicated that the data needed further explanation. The asterisks indicated, among other things, that the district's numbers included a step and lane change. In other words, it gave individual teacher salary increases included one more year experience, and a lane change (additional education). Since not every teacher would be getting enough additional education to change lanes by the next year, the teachers criticized the letter as misleading. The teachers were very upset by the statements in the district letter. It appeared

to open the schism between teachers and administration even more and to send a clear message to the teachers that they are union.

Another "union" message in the letter discussed what the procedures would be if the teachers decided to walk out during the middle of the school day. The majority of teachers in this elementary school were "horrified" by even the thought that they would walk out during the day. As one teacher stated: "We would never leave 550 children unattended in this school in the middle of the day. What do they [the district administration] think we are?" These teachers were truly insulted by the assumption that they were so unprofessional that they would do something like that.

Along the lines of teacher as professional was the theme that "teaching is a proud profession". Generally, the teachers felt that education was valuable and that they made a difference in the lives of their students. However, the inversion climate projected an opposing theme of embarrassment about being a teacher. As one teacher stated: "Sometimes I hate to tell people I am a teacher. it always changes the tone of the conversation."

The theme of working with the district administration and their principal was an emergent theme in the model kernel climate. This was most apparent with the principal of the school who enjoyed a fairly open communication environment (given the context) with her staff. As was previously mentioned, the principal attempted to diffuse the tension in the school with the use of humor. For the most part, this was enjoyed and appreciated by the teachers. Another example of this openness and cooperation was that the principal was able to explain procedures to the staff regarding keys, report cards, etc. Her belief and expectation that they would respond to her wishes reinforced the team effort in making the strike as least disruptive as possible. The teachers did not ever question the procedures and were quite willing to go along with her requests.

However, "working against the district" was a theme in the inversion climate. Again, there were several events and communications which encouraged this theme. Much of the communication occurred when the principal was not around. While there was a relatively open communication climate, there were times when conversation would stop when she walked into the room. When she asked about it, one teacher replied, "Well you finally caught on [that they stopped talking about negotiations when she came in]".

Another event which seemed to proliferate the anti-administration theme occured during the tenure of the previous superintendent. At the time of the negotiations, the district's superintendent had been in his job for less than a year. The superintendent before him had made some fairly bold assurances to teachers, even to the point of pledging to take the district into bankruptcy to raise teacher salaries. When this superintendent left the district, the school board failed to acknowledge his promises. Of course, this greatly upset the teachers. As one teacher stated: "We started to do extra things again because of _____'s promises and he leaves and the district says 'too bad' to us. We were misled."

The practical structures which were most apparent the day before the strike were displayed in the communication of the teachers. The nonverbal affect displays were the most obvious. Instead of an excited, charged atmosphere, the atmosphere was quiet, tense, anxious, depressed. Many of the teachers explained their fatalistic feelings -- that the strike was inevitable and that they were very disappointed about that.

The Structuration Process

Having described the climate in the last section, the structuration process itself can now be discussed. The next section describes how climate influenced and was influenced by organizational factors.

The Relationship Between Practices, Interaction, and Climate

As was mentioned earlier in this paper, there are three modalities of structuration: interpretive schemes, norms, and power resources. Climate is a part of all three modalities.

Interpretive Schemes. As an interpretive scheme, the climate of the organization dictates actions. Teachers were able to coordinate activities and apply meaning to events based upon the climate. Given the model kernel climate generalized belief that teachers are professionals, the letter which was sent to parents discussing the procedures which the district would follow in the event that teachers walked out during the day, was interpreted by the teachers as an insult. In the inversion climate, however, teachers were viewed primarily as union members. Given the generalized beliefs of the inversion, this part of the letter might not be interpreted negatively at all and in fact could have been interpreted positively. It is important to note that while the climate was influencing the interpretive scheme, the interpretive scheme was also

influencing and reinforcing the climate. The teachers who used the model kernel climate to interpret the letter as an insult (because they are professional, they would not walk off the job) are actually creating the inversion climate (the message sent by the district actually reinforces the "teachers are union" generalized belief of the kernel inversion climate). The dominance in the inversion climate was with this group of teachers who interact most with one another.

Norms. Climate also influences the norms of the organization. The teachers were able to identify, given the climate, what was considered to be appropriate action and what was not considered appropriate action. The comment that "striking is not a teacher thing to do" operated strongly out of the model kernel climate which encouraged teachers as professional. Again what is interesting, that the norms then also influence the organization. Had the teachers gone out on strike (they settled in the eleventh hour), the norm of striking would have served to reinforce the inversion climate (teachers are union). Since they did not strike, their norm of behavior reinforced and recreated the generalized belief of the model kernel climate that teachers are professionals.

Power. The power resources which were available to all actors in the drama also served in the structuration of climate. While the inversion climate encouraged teachers to use power structures to their advantage, the model kernel climate actually served to inhibit their power. There were several ways in which the generalized belief that "we are professional" actually inhibited their power. First, they were unwilling to walk off of the job in the middle of the day. Second, these teachers were highly cooperative with the principal in seeing that keys were turned in, that report cards and conference schedules were finished, etc. before the strike. Third, by allowing the paraprofessional staff to enter the building without obstruction or comment, these teachers were not able to gain as much support from that group as they may have if the inversion climate were operative. And these behaviors, in turn, served to recreate climate. By acting as professionals, these teachers were actually reinforcing the climate of professionalism in the school and decreasing the extent to which the inversion climate was pervasive. What is interesting to note, is that the district administration continued to reinforce the inversion climate through climatic apparatuses, even though it would have been in their best interest (from a

negotiations stand point) to encourage the model kernel climate. This will be elaborated on in the next section of this paper.

Interaction patterns also serve in the production and reproduction of climates (Poole, 1987). So organizational networks, who communicates with whom, can be a factor in the structuration process. Poole predicts that highly interconnected networks will lead to unified kernel climates with the less connected sectors of the network having particularized climates. This prediction was validated in this organization. For the most part, the school had a dense interconnected network. However, there were some outlying sectors. The most obvious outlying sector was the group of fourth grade teachers. This group has historically been the divergent thinkers in the building and had periodically claimed that their position (of teaching the oldest children in the building) gives them some special problems which other teachers do not have to deal with. Poole's prediction holds true with this group as they were by far the most consistent in their perceptions of the inversion climate.

Poole (1987) also predicts that strong network control leads to a kernel climate which serves as a model for particular climates. This prediction was also validated in this research. There were two central figures in network control: the building strike coordinator and the principal. Information about the district's position came from the principal. Information about the union's position came from the strike coordinator. These two individuals were the key control figures in the network. In each case, her impact on the network is apparent. The principal of the school treated the staff, for the most part, as professionals. This encouraged the professional kernel climate. The strike coordinator encouraged the inversion climate by letting into the network strike information.

The degree of coorientation over climate also influences the structuration process (Poole, 1987). Coorientation is the simultaneous orientation of two people toward an event or object (Newcombe, 1953). Individual are cooriented if they agree and understand. In other words, coorientation has two elements to it: agreement and understanding about agreement. In the case of climate, consensus exists when organizational members agree about the climate and understand that they agree about the climate. In the case of this organization, dissensus existed. There was disagreement about the climate, but organizational members understood that they disagreed. These teachers knew that the model and

kernel climates existed, but disagreed over which climate should guide organizational action. The teacher who was embarrassed to be a teacher believed that the inversion climate ought to guide action. However, several other teachers felt that the model kernel climate should guide organizational actions.

Poole (1987) also predicts that in a state of dissensus, the link between climate and behavior will be weak. This prediction was not supported in this organization. In fact, it is possible that the state of dissensus itself was the greatest influence on behavior. It was this conflict over the climate and the varying perceptions regarding which climate should be used to guide organizational actions which led to the affect displays associated with depression, anxiety, and a general fatalistic mood among the staff.

Influence of Macro-level Organizational Design Variables on Climate

Poole (1987) emphasizes that the two most important macro-level factors in the appropriation of structures are climatic apparatuses and organizational design.

Climate Apparatuses. Climatic apparatuses include "institutional apparatuses for creating and maintaining climates as well as symbols, attitudes, ideologies" (Poole, p. 49). Apparatuses in this case study included letters to parents sent by the district, letters to the teachers from the union, strike meetings, etc. Poole calls apparatuses conscious climate controls. As was previously mentioned, the letter sent home to the parents encouraged a union generalized belief. Likewise, letters sent to the teachers by the union encouraged a union generalized belief. Both of these apparatuses served to support the inversion climate in the school. It is interesting that the opposing sides of the negotiation used apparatuses which supported the same climate. The fact that the model kernel climate seemed to override these influences is also interesting in that it suggests that climate apparatuses had less influence on the structuration process than other influences.

Organizational Design. Organizational design features also influence climate structuring. They are to some degree responsible for the interaction system. As was previously mentioned, the principal was the key network link between the district and the teachers and the strike coordinator was the key link between the union and the teachers. Their structural position influenced the network as they became gatekeepers. However, the strong kernel climate adversely influenced

the power of the strike coordinator to encourage the inversion climate. Likewise, the majority of communication to the staff from the principal (with the exception of the peanuts) supported the kernel climate and its beliefs.

Discussion

Overall, structuration theory proved to be an effective model for the analysis of climate in this case study. Theoretically, structuration theory offers researchers an opportunity to explore climate as an intersubjective construct -- creating, and a creation of, organizational factors. This is a major advance for climate research because researchers can now uncover climates which may not have otherwise been discovered because researchers were searching for either agreement or significant means.

Earlier in the paper, several theories of climate emergence were outlined. An inherent assumption of these theories is that climate exists at one level of the organization. Climate is assumed to be either an organization-level phenomenon, or an individual-level phenomenon. In either case, climate is measurable at one level of the organization.

As a psychological construct, climate is measured by individuals perceptions of climate. These individual perceptions are then averaged to create a mean psychological climate statistic. As an organization level construct, climate is measured by consensus -- or shared agreement about the climate.

In using these approaches, researchers are searching for a climate at one level of an organization. The problem is, climate is intersubjective -- at many levels of organizations. Using either the organizational level assumption or the individual psychological level assumptions would have produced very different results for this study. The researcher would have been unable to identify one outstanding organizational climate. In fact, because the kernel climate had an inversion, it is likely that neither of these climates would not have been discovered. Had agreement been sought, little would have been found. The divergent beliefs found within the kernel and inversion climate would have made the discovery of a significant mean difficult. Theoretically, structuration theory allows researchers to uncover climate at multiple organizational levels and as a part of multiple organizational features.

Another interesting finding from this research is that dissensus does not seem to lead to a reduction of the power of the climate in influencing actions. In this organization, the dissensus itself seemed to become a powerful force in creating the climate. Given that structuration theory argues that climate is an intersubjective feature of the organization, this finding makes sense.

Pragmatically, this research offers some interesting insights into the negotiation process. Messages which are intended to weaken others' positions in the negotiation process by emphasizing the negative and unreasonable demands of the other may in fact serve to bolster the opposition. In this district, the letter which was sent out to the parents encouraged the inversion climate general belief of the union. For negotiation purposes, the district would have been better off supporting the professional general belief of the model kernel climate. Ultimately they supported the inversion climate. In this particular situation, the model kernel climate was stronger than the inversion, but continued coopting by the district of climate apparatuses which support the inversion climate could lead to the inversion becoming a model kernel climate. This would make future negotiation processes even more painful.

Second, the teaching profession and teacher negotiations are unique in that while most teachers consider themselves professionals, they are also union members. These teachers viewed union as an antithesis of professional, yet the school climates reflected both of these positions. Negotiators would be wise to recognize the potential tension which is caused by this unique situation and the extent to which tension serves to defeat purposes.

There are clearly some limitations to this research. First, as a case study, its results are unique to this organization alone. Only research using structuration theory in many varied organizations will lead to conclusive results about the structuration of climates in all organizations. Second, as a study conducted in a school, its generalizeability is limited. As was mentioned in the paper, teachers are in the unique position of being both union and professionals.

Aside from the limitations, this research makes an important contribution because it applies structuration theory to an "actual" organization. The value of structuration theory in addressing some of the key controversies in climate research is undisputable. Overall, this theory offers much promise to researchers trying to uncover the many webs of climates in organizations.

Figure 1

Concept Pool

Education Hard-working
Caring Committed
Family-oriented

Professional/Union Dedicated/Won't Be Abused
Proud to be a Teacher/Embarrassed to be a Teacher
Humanistic/Realistic

Collective Beliefs

Model Kernel Climate
Teaching is a proud profession
Teachers are professionals
We work with district as a team

Inversion Particular Climate
I am embarrassed to be a teacher
Teachers are union
We have to fight to get anything in this district
We work against the district

Affective Reactions

Apprehension
Tension
Quiet resolve
Fatalistic attitude
Sad
Depressed

Anger
Frustration
Excited

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